



Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
God's work. Our hands.

Baxter & Saron Church News ***December 2023***



Our Saviour's Lutheran Church of Baxter & Saron Lutheran Church
Serving together to make Jesus known in our communities and beyond

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Friends in Christ,

It is newsletter day, and I've been sitting at my computer for the last hour and a half waiting for inspiration to strike. I've calculated how long I have been at Saron and Baxter: the odometer rolled over to 8 years in September. I considered sharing some of the wisdom that I've accumulated over that time, but I'm not here to write fiction. I also thought about writing about Advent -- how it is a time to prepare for both the celebration of the birth of Christ and Christ's return, but I feel like I've been there and done that. I certainly should thank both congregations for my continued employment. I should also mention how the Joint Ministry Board, in only a couple of meetings without a set agenda, has come up with some small tweaks that have really improved worship. It is remarkable what can happen when we get together and talk. And what year-end writing would be complete without an overview?

Tami and I were blessed with our fifth and sixth grandchildren. Tami is putting together something special with her tutoring business. I now have a storage space without stairs, so collecting and distributing furniture has become much easier. Organization and distribution of clothing and small household items at the Chippewa Valley Youth Club has been taken over by another, much more efficient, group. I continue to take donations of almost anything. Finally, our personal petting zoo continues to grow. Nine words in this sentence will make 250 total.

**In Christ,
Pastor Matt**



OFFICIAL ACTS – NOVEMBER



Harold Ilaug

A funeral service for Harold Ilaug was held on November 21, 2023 at Our Saviour's Lutheran Church of Baxter with Pastor Matt officiating.

We extend sympathy to the family at this time of loss.

CONGRATULATIONS AND BLESSINGS TO...



Winifred Ima & Julius

Abasiana were born to Walker & Emee Danielson on October 24th. They both weighed in at 4 lbs. 10 oz.

God's Blessings to the family!

PARISH NEWS

December Worship

• **SUNDAY, DECEMBER 3** **ADVENT 2**

Communion & Noisy Offering

Baxter - Santa Anonymous

Saron - YMC Santa's Sleigh

Retirement Celebration for Dick Olson at Baxter

Saron decorates for Christmas at 8:30 am

• **SUNDAY, DECEMBER 10** **ADVENT 3**

Sunday School Christmas Program at Baxter

Communion & Noisy Offering for food shelf at Saron

Pastor Matt leads worship at Brookside Senior Living

• **SUNDAY, DECEMBER 17** **ADVENT 4**

Sunday School Christmas Program at Saron

Communion & Noisy Offering for food shelf at Baxter

No Sunday School at Baxter

Baxter Back-up Program Date if needed

• **SUNDAY, DECEMBER 24** **CHRISTMAS EVE**

No morning worship services or Sunday School

4:00 pm Worship at Baxter

6:00 pm Worship at Saron

Candlelight Worship with Communion

- **SUNDAY, DECEMBER 31** **CHRISTMAS 2**
No Sunday School
Karen Jacobson leads worship

Attendance Figures

Baxter Attendance Figures			
Date	# Attending in 2022	Date	# Attending in 2023
10/30	52	10/29	34
11/6	50	11/5	38
11/13	55	11/12	45
11/20	51	11/19	56

Saron Attendance Figures			
Date	# Attending in 2022	Date	# Attending in 2023
10/30	40	10/29	58
11/6	52	11/5	42
11/13	34	11/12	45
11/20	72 Baptism	11/19	55



- Military Service Personnel & their families
- Our Companion Synod in South Africa
- For Continued Healing
 - *Ardyce Thompson
 - *Cindy Jurgenson
 - *Susan Siverhus
 - *Sharla Kruger
 - *Sue Ziegler
 - *Virgil Enevoldsen
 - *Shirley Sachariason
 - *Chantel Death
 - *Jerry Johnson

Please contact the church office for a specific prayer request or if a home or hospital visit is needed.

Christmas Eve Worship Services



Our Christmas Eve Worship Services will be held at 4:00 pm at Our Saviour's Lutheran Church of Baxter and 6:00 pm at Saron Lutheran Church. Please join us for these special candlelight services!

Poinsettias for Christmas Eve

We encourage people to share poinsettias to decorate the church for Christmas Eve services. If you are providing a poinsettia in memory of someone, please **contact Pam BEFORE Wed. Dec. 20th** to get it in the bulletin for Christmas Eve.

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Sunday School Notes

- **BAXTER'S** Sunday School Christmas Program will be held on Sun. Dec. 10th during the 9:00 am worship time. The back-up date is Sun. Dec. 17th. If the back-up date isn't needed there will NOT be Sunday School that day at Baxter.
- **SARON'S** Sunday School Christmas Program will be on Sun. Dec. 17th during the 10:30 am worship time. Saron Sunday School will meet at **8:45 am on Sun. Dec. 10th & 17th**, to practice for the Christmas Program.
- There will **NOT** be Sunday School on December 24th or December 31st.

Annual Meeting Dates



Annual Meeting dates have been set for both churches. The Annual Meeting for **Saron will be Sun. Jan. 14th** and **Baxter's will be Sun. 21st**. On Sun. Jan. 14th we will switch worship service times to allow Saron to have a potluck dinner with Annual Meeting to follow. **Deadlines for getting reports in to the church office are 8:30 am: Saron - Tuesday morning, Jan. 9th and Baxter - Tuesday morning Jan. 16th.**

Nominating Committees

Following are our nominating committees for this year:

- **Baxter - Berta Bjerkeset, Cody Dyshaw & Brenda Berends**
- **Saron - Jaden Schwendemann, Stan Knudson & Steve Rodeberg**

Audit Committees

Following are our audit committees for this year:

- **Baxter - Cameron Jurgenson 21, 22, 23 - Larry Anderson 22, 23, 24 & Kalen Bjerkeset 23, 24 & 25**
- **Saron - Lauree Spletter 21, 22, 23 - Lisa Sederstrom 22, 23, 24 & person yet to be named 23, 24, 25**

ELCA Good Gifts

As members of the ELCA, we believe that God's love in Jesus is a gift. ELCA Good Gifts is just one way you can share that love with others. Each year, Americans spend over \$300 billion on Christmas shopping. Imagine what would happen if we could redirect that spending toward the things that really matter, like putting an end to hunger. With ELCA Good Gifts, you can do just that.

ELCA Good Gift Trees will be available at Saron & Baxter in December. You may choose one or more ornaments, make the donation; then take the ornament home and hang it on your own Christmas tree. OR...do you have a person that is very hard to shop for? All of these gifts can be given in honor of friends or loved ones and they make great alternatives to traditional Christmas gifts.

If you have any questions, please contact Karen Jacobson at Saron or Carla Johnson at Baxter.



Joint Ministry Board Minutes

Joint Ministry Board Minutes

Saron Lutheran & Our Savior's Lutheran Church of Baxter
October 26, 2023 @ 7:00 PM
Church Office in Montevideo

Members present: Lori Formo, Michelle May, Dustin Johnson, Judi Eggert. Members Absent: Lyndsae Dack, David Lipps, Heidi Lipps. Also present: Pastor Matt Danielson

The Committee started with a brief discussion about music at Saron and how far in advance the music selections are determined in order to incorporate some contemporary music into the service. Pastor Matt indicated we need to follow up with Pam as to when those selections are made.

The Committee discussed the upcoming Advent season and Pastor Matt indicated the Advent readings and hymns needed to be determined a few weeks ago because of the other scheduled activities such as the children's Christmas programs. However, the two churches may be holding their Christmas programs on different weekends, likely December 10th and 17th, but to be confirmed with Pam. Therefore, the opposite weekend of the Christmas program for each Church could have something special or different. The Committee discussed ideas for this service including:

- Are there different stories to be told around the traditional Christmas story?
- Can we compare different versions of the story?
- How was the story put together considering no one had all the pieces?
- Focus on one side of the story from the Shepherd's point of view or the three wise men.

Pastor Matt liked the idea about the Shepherd's perspective of the Christmas Story and will consider incorporating this into one of the services in December.

The Committee discussed other ideas to build fellowship and engage members including:

- Family retreat to Green Lake
- How to create more impact for people?
- Kids activities during worship

- Some enjoy taking notes or a more interactive approach to learn
- Utilizing different formats such as sitting at tables instead of pews to create more interaction
- Incorporating table activities in the basement may work well during Lent
- Potlucks on Communion Sundays
- Restart the Coffee & Cookies before and after services. It was requested that Pastor Matt ask Pam to recreate the sign-up sheets.

The group discussed the timing and responsibility of decorating the churches for Christmas. The group agreed that decorating should occur after service on November 19th due to the Advent services starting on November 26th. It is helpful for members to participate in the decorating and to have a couple of designated individuals to coordinate the volunteers.

Pastor Matt updated the Committee about Thanksgiving Eve services which will be held at Trinity Lutheran Church in Montevideo.

The Committee then brought up other topics for discussion related to regular services. The Committee discussed singing during Communion which could be done with playing music with lyrics and familiar hymns that are easy to sing along too and attendees can easily stop and rejoin during the Communion.

The Committee reviewed times we sit versus stand and possibly trying variations of this during the service.

The Committee and Pastor Matt acknowledged the valuable work of Pam Schultz in keeping everything organized and completing the various duties of her position, as well as incorporating changes into the bulletin and service at the request of the Committee.

The next meeting of the Ministry Committee will be January 11, 2024 at 7:00 pm in the Church Office. The back-up date will be January 18th in the event of inclement weather. The Committee will discuss feedback from the Advent season, as well as upcoming ideas for the Lenten period which begins on Ash Wednesday, February 14, 2024.

There being no further business to discuss, the meeting was concluded with a prayer.

*** BAXTER NEWS ***



Retirement Celebration for Dick Olson

Baxter will be saying **THANK YOU** to Dick Olson with coffee and treats at church on Sun. Dec. 3rd, following the 9:00 am worship service. Please join us in thanking him for all his years of service!



Treats for the Sunday School Program

All bakers... hoping you will take time and share your goodies, a dozen will do, on Sun. Dec. 10th for treats after the Sunday School program.



WEEKEND BACKPACKS

Hunger doesn't take the weekend off

Backpacks for Jacks

Baxter will be packing Backpacks for Jacks on **Thu. Dec. 21st at 1:30 pm.** Please use the elementary front door. It takes 30 minutes, maybe an hour, depending on the number of workers and their expertise. All are welcome! Please let Carla know if you are interested!!

Baxter Financial Status

As of October 31, 2023, Baxter currently remains negative approximately \$20,000 year to date. We have continued to be \$10,000 into our line of credit at the bank and have also loaned ourselves \$10,000 from our investment accounts to cover this shortfall. As we enter the year end, please prayerfully consider giving what you are able to help get our budget back on track to finish the year. Thank you for your consideration and support in this!



Grace Christian Outreach Ministries

Grace Christian Outreach Ministries needs our help! We are collecting **Hats, Mittens & Gloves** in **December and January.** There is a donation box in the Chapel. Any questions, please contact Cody Dyshaw or a Council member. Thank you for supporting this wonderful mission!



Baxter Altar Guild 2024

Month	Name	Land Line	Cell Phone
Jan.	Carol Litke	320-855-2404	
Feb.	Bridget Bossert		320-226-0898
March	Deb Anderson		320-226-4557
	Diane Olson	320-855-2370	320-226-5298
April	Brenda Berends		320-226-2360
	Tracy Maher		507-226-6000
May	Lori Erickson	320-752-4731	320-226-4548
June	Karen Borstad	320-769-4622	
July	Carla Johnson	320-752-4647	
Aug.	Lori Larson	320-269-8472	320-226-1733
Sept.	Sara Erickson		320-226-4081
Oct.	Gayle Staab		320-361-0297
Nov.	Caroline Nordaune	320-769-2684	320-226-4503
Dec.	Tera Gades		320-226-8452

Banners will be changed by Karen & Larry Borstad

* SARON NEWS *



Saron Christmas Decorating

Please join us in decorating the Christmas tree and the church at **8:30 am, BEFORE the worship service on Sun. Dec. 3rd**. All help is gratefully appreciated!

Saron Family Work Group Leaders

Please note that the Saron Family Work Group Leaders will change on January 1st for 2024. Following are the new leaders:

Work Group # 1 Leaders - Dave & Diane Dieter

Work Group # 2 Leader - Keith & Robin Beito

The leaders of the work groups rotate and continue as leaders for one year.

Saron Prayer Chain



We are updating our prayer chain, using the original names. There is a sign-up sheet on the bulletin board. If you would like to be added, please sign your name and phone number. If you would like to

be taken off the prayer chain, please indicate that on the sign-up sheet.

Saron Janitors

There is a sign-up sheet for 2024 up on the bulletin board. Hurry and sign up now for the month of your choice! The council will be assigning people for open months after the Annual Meeting in January.



Upcoming COMMUNITY EVENTS

Festival of Nine Lessons and Carols

Trinity Lutheran Church Wednesday, December 6th

The Trinity Lutheran Church Choir will be presenting their annual Festival of Nine Lessons and Carols on Wed. Dec. 6th. Supper will be served from 5:15 – 6:15 pm. A free-will offering will be accepted for the meal. The service will begin



at 6:15 pm. All are welcome to attend and admission is free. The Festival of Nine Lessons and Carols celebrates the Advent and Christmas seasons through a series of Bible readings and carols.



Baxter Council Meeting Minutes

Baxter Council Meeting Minutes – November 15, 2023

Meeting was called to order by President Cody Dyshaw
Members present included: Inez Bjerkeset, Jeff Johnson, Deb Anderson, Jeremy Enevoldsen & Loren Bjerkeset
Staff present: Pastor Matt Danielson, Gayle Staab
M/S/C (Jeff/Jeremy) to accept the Secretary's as printed.
M/S/C (Inez/Deb) to accept the Treasurer's Report as printed.

OLD BUSINESS:

- Thermostat Updates -Installed a week ago. Will schedule training with Kevin Augeson & Kristen will need to be trained. \$675 to install.
 - Financial Update – status -Right now we have loans from Investment fund for \$10,000 and \$10,000 from bank. Should put in newsletter to make everyone aware. We need additional money for other bills at the end of the year also.
- We have another \$5,000 available from the bank if needed.

- Dick Olson Retirement Celebration-Sun., Dec. 3rd
-Council to provide cake/food. Inez will bring lemonade and Deb will bring cookies. Anyone can bring other sweets.
- Candles on the altar-ordered 11/14/23-box of 250/same price as box of 100. Pam ordered us candles to get us by for 3 months until we can find other candles.
- Need to find alternate option-electric
- Carla J. is also reviewing options
- Confirmation Retreat Bill-Abby of the Hills -Will pay through Sunday school account which is \$334.73 total
- Signs in front of church -move out 20 feet from all concrete for ease of snow removal in the winter.
- Sidewalk project - if we spend more than \$8,000 we will need congregation to approve. Will bring up at the annual meeting. This will probably be done in the spring.
- Dead evergreen tree was taken down by Jeff Nyheim which also had broken limbs.

NEW BUSINESS:

- GCOM (Grace Christian Outreach Ministry)-Dec./Jan. donation needs-Hats/Mittens/Gloves
- 2024 Budget **M/C/S** (Jeremy/Loren) to approve projected budget for 2024. Includes a 7% synod recommended pay raise for Matt and Pam.
- Nominating Committee
-Appoint 2 outgoing council members to serve with Berta Bjerkeset. Brenda Berends & Cody Dyshaw are willing to serve with Berta.
- Outgoing council members: Brenda Berends, Cody Dyshaw, Cindy Jurgenson & Kalen Bjerkeset
- Auditing Committee
-Elect 1 person, not serving on the council, to serve with Cameron Jurgenson & Larry Anderson for a 3-year term. Kalen Bjerkeset will serve on auditing committee.
- Sunday school program is scheduled for Dec. 10th. Loren said apples were ordered for treats after the program. He ordered 100 apples.
The next Council meeting will be Wed., December 13th at 8:00 PM at the church.
Lord's Prayer / Adjourn (Jeff/Jeremy)
Brenda Berends, Secretary

Saron Council Meeting Minutes

Saron Council Meeting Minutes – November 15, 2023

MEMBERS PRESENT: Steve J., Steve R., Stan, Shaun, Janice S., Paul, Ross, Diane, Mike, Heidi, and Izzy.
Meeting was called to order by President Steve Jacobson. The pastor's report was unanimously approved. The secretary's report was approved as presented. Diane went over the treasurer's report. After a few questions, which were answered, this report was approved. The office account report was also approved as presented.

OLD BUSINESS:

- We discussed the fundraising project for the remodeling project. We discussed the meat raffle. Most of the remodeling project has been taken care of. Some of the money we got for the storm damage was used for this project.
 - Izzy has basically finished the storm damage issues. He still has a few things to finish. Because we are short of money to pay for the storm damage, we passed a motion to take money from the Parsonage savings account and pay Izzy. This motion was passed unanimously. However, it means we will need more money for future unknown projects.
 - The elevator was discussed. It seems to be working fine now but phone service needs to be installed in the elevator. Steve J. is going to complete this project.
 - We discussed mileage for the Pastor. It will be further discussed with both councils. This is about mileage for non-members of our congregations when Pastor Matt helps out with weddings, funerals, etc. Our councils think this kind of ministry is wonderful. We encourage Matt to continue this ministry. We decided to start with 100 miles per month and re-evaluate at a later date.
- #### **NEW BUSINESS:**
- Water testing has been done. Some issues were found but have been corrected.
 - Pastor Esse passed away and left the church \$1,000.
 - We decided to give Heritage Hill \$100 for use of their facility.
 - The Synod came out with some new guidelines for pulpit supply.

- Stan K. and Steve R. will serve on the nominating committee with Jaden for the annual meeting.
 - A discussion was held on the auditing committee. We need one new member.
 - The budget was discussed. We voted unanimously to approve the Pastor's salary to go with the guidelines from the synod. Pam also got a raise in pay.
 - Work groups were discussed. We need to decide on group leaders for 2024.
 - The next meeting will be December 27.
- BEING NO OTHER BUSINESS, THE MEETING WAS ADJOURNED WITH THE LORD'S PRAYER.

Joint Council Meeting Minutes

Joint Council Meeting Minutes – November 15, 2023

The meeting was called to order by President Steve Jacobson.

The pastor's written report was unanimously approved. Secretary's report FROM THE LAST MEETING was unanimously approved.

We went over the office account report. The report was approved.

OLD BUSINESS: There was no old business.

NEW BUSINESS:

- The annual meeting will be 1-14-24 for Saron and 1-21-24 for Baxter. Remember the time for church services will change.
 - 2024 joint council budget items were discussed. We unanimously decided to go with the guidelines for the pastor's salary. Pam's salary was adjusted too.
 - We discussed Christmas services. Baxter will have a 4:00 pm service and Saron will have a 6:00 pm service. No morning service that day.
 - We discussed worship time for 2024. Going back to 9 and 11 has been suggested. This will be better for Matt.
- THE MEETING WAS ADJOURNED.

Baxter December Birthdays

Tanner Tufto	12/1
Desi McCarty	12/1
Eleanor Bjerkeset	12/2
Tyler Erickson	12/3
Allen Gruchow	12/4
Cole Dyshaw	12/5
Maverick Eslick-Coats	12/7
Ross Jurgenson	12/9
Russell Moseng	12/11
Dale Tufto	12/13
Tyler Deuth	12/15
Sarah Paige	12/17
Jenifer Fitcher	12/18
Danielle Moseng	12/18
Hadley Schmitz	12/20
Briggs Maher	12/22
Zariah Rojas	12/22
Wilder Kosbab	12/24
Kenneth Perkins	12/24
Larry Fjoseide	12/24
Kim Norman	12/30
Dan Moe	12/30
Kathy Ervin	12/30
Gary Paige	12/30
Marly Skogrand	12/31



Saron December Birthdays

Martin Olson	12/1
Robin Beito	12/1
Dawn Sletten	12/3
Dane Sherod	12/3
Lynn Rodeberg	12/3
Andrew Siverhus	12/6
Janice Sachariason	12/13
Blair Reuther	12/17
Christopher Nygaard	12/21
Devon Siverhus	12/23
Blaine Sederstrom	12/24

